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Not of Woman Born increases our understanding of the history of the medical profession, of medical iconography, and of ideas surrounding "unnatural" childbirth. Blumenfeld-Kosinski compares texts and visual images in order to trace the evolution of Caesarean birth as it was perceived by the main actors involved—pregnant women, medical practitioners, and artistic or literary interpreters.

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Overview. "Not of woman born, the Fortunate, the Unborn"—the terms designating those born by Caesarean section in medieval and Renaissance Europe were mysterious and ambiguous. Examining representations of Caesarean birth in legend and art and tracing its history in medical writing, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski addresses the web of religious, ethical, and cultural questions concerning abdominal delivery in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

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Not of Woman Born: Representations of Caesarean Birth in Medieval and Renaissance Culture. "Vividly tracing the evolution of Caesarean birth from the early 1300s (when the operation was performed almost exclusively by midwives) through the Renaissance period (when midwives were considered witches and male surgeons took control), Blumenfeld-Kosinski . . . does more than provide [an] engrossingly accessible, historical account of the now-commonplace procedure--she unveils the roots of a ...

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